

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT MOSCOW 6416 ACTION STATE APR 1.

QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MOSCOW 6416

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OGEN SOPN UR
SUBJECT: AMBASSADORIAL INTERVIEW FOR VOICE OF AMERICA

1. AMBASSADOR GRANTED INTERVIEW MARCH 31 TO VOICE OF AMERICA EASTERN EUROPEAN BUREAU CHIEF MARK HOPKINS. INTERVIEW, WHICH RAN NINETEEN MINUTES, WAS TAPED BY HOPKINS FOR BROADCAST.

2. FOLLOWING IS VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW:
(BEGIN TEXT)

HOPKINS: MR. AMBASSADOR, THERE'S A GOOD DEAL BEING SAID NOW ABOUT DETERIORATING SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS. HOW WOULD YOU, AS THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW, CHARACTERIZE THESE RELATIONS NOW?

AMBASSADOR TOON: IN MY VIEW OUR RELATIONS ARE GOING THROUGH A RATHER DIFFICULT PERIOD AT THE PRESENT TIME. I DON'T THINK ANY RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL ON EITHER SIDE WOULD
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DENY THIS. I FRANKLY DON'T KNOW HOW LONG THIS IS GOING TO LAST. I'M AN OPTIMIST, AND I HOPE THAT WE'LL SEE AN UPTURN IN THE FAIRLY NEAR FUTURE. BUT I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT FOR BOTH SIDES TO RECOGNIZE THAT WHEN YOU DO HAVE AN UPTURN, AN IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS, THIS COMES ABOUT IN LARGE MEASURE BECAUSE OF A COOPERATIVE EFFORT. AND WHEN YOU HAVE A DOWNTURN, IT'S NOT JUST THE FAULT OF ONE SIDE. IT'S TO A DEGREE THE FAULT OF BOTH SIDES. I THINK THAT WE RECOGNIZE THIS. UNFORTUNATELY, OUR SOVIET COLLEAGUES TEND TO PLACE THE BLAME EXCLUSIVELY ON US AND I THINK

THAT'S WRONG. BUT I WOULD HOPE THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD MAKE A GOOD COLLEGE TRY, AS WE PUT IT IN THE STATES, TO BRING ABOUT AN IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS AND I WOULD HOPE THAT THIS WOULD HAPPEN SOON.

Q: WHAT ARE THE REASONS YOU SEE, MR. AMBASSADOR, FOR THIS DOWNTURN YOU REFER TO?

A: WELL, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF REASONS, SOME SIMPLE, SOME COMPLEX. I THINK MOST OF THEM STEM FROM SOME OF THE PROBLEM AREAS WHICH EXIST IN OUR RELATIONS. NOW LET ME JUST TICK OFF SOME OF THESE PROBLEM AREAS AND GIVE MY VIEW AS TO WHERE WE STAND AND WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE. FIRST IS THE AREA OF SALT. NOW, ON SALT THE SOVIETS HAVE TAKEN THE POSITION THAT THE REASON FOR THE FAILURE TO CONCLUDE AN AGREEMENT SO FAR LIES SOLELY WITH THE UNITED STATES. BUT I THINK THAT ALL OF US MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THE REASONS FOR OUR FAILURE TO REACH AGREEMENT SO FAR ARE MANY AND COMPLEX AND THE SOVIETS, FRANKLY, BEAR AS MUCH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PRESENT SITUATION AS WE DO. NOW RECENTLY THEY'VE BEEN IMPUTING BAD FAITH TO THE UNITED STATES FOR THE SLOW PROGRESS IN THE SALT TALKS, CLAIMING THAT WE ARE SEARCHING FOR ONE-SIDED ADVANTAGES. THEY ALSO TRY TO FORCE AGREEMENT BY IMPLYING A SERIOUS DETERIORATION IN OUR RELATIONS IF SALT IS NOT CONCLUDED SOON. THIS WAS THE ESSENCE, AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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YOU KNOW, OF THE ARBATOV ARTICLE THIS PAST WEEK IN PRAVDA. NOW FRANKLY I FEEL THESE TACTICS ARE NOT HELPFUL. NOR, FRANKLY, ARE THESE CHARGES BELIEVABLE BY ANYONE WHO IS EVEN SLIGHTLY FAMILIAR WITH THE SALT PROCESS. FOR OUR PART, WE CONTINUE TO WORK AND HOPE FOR A SALT TREATY IN THE NEAR FUTURE. BUT IN ALL FRANKNESS THE PROCESS IS NOT SERVED BY A CAMPAGIN OF THREATS AND CHARGES SUCH AS WE SEE AT THE PRESENT TIME IN THE SOVIET PRESS. THAT'S THE FIRST PROBLEM AREA.

- THE SECOND PROBLEM AREA, IN MY VIEW, IS THE MIDDLE EAST. NOW, ON THE MIDDLE EAST THE SOVIETS SEEM TO BE OBSESSED WITH WHAT THEY INTERPRET AS OUR BACKING AWAY FROM COMMITMENTS MADE IN THE JOINT U.S.-SOVIET STATEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST WHICH WE CONCLUDED IN NEW YORK LAST OCTOBER. THEY BELIEVE THAT OUR SUPPORT - AND SOME OF THEM SAY INSTIGATION - OF SADAT'S INITIATIVES TOWARD ISRAEL PRESENTS YET ONE MORE UNITED STATES ATTEMPT TO EXCLUDE THEM FROM THE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATING PROCESS. THEY SIMPLY DO NOT ACCEPT THE FACT THAT ISRAELI-AMERICAN POLITICAL DIFFERENCES ARE OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE OR ARE EVEN REAL. NOW IN EACH ONE OF THESE INSTANCES THE SOVIETS ARE MISTAKEN. MEANWHILE THEY ARE ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ARAB FRONT WHICH IS ANTI-SADAT, ANTI-U.S. AND OF COURSE ANTI-ISRAELI. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS THEY HAVE INCREASED MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN ARAB COUNTRIES AND HAVE PAPERED OVER THEIR POLICY DIFFERENCES

WITH THEM. THEY CLAIM STILL TO SUPPORT THE ROEAR FUTURE AND THEREFORE THEY HAVE NOT PRESSED THEIR ARAB FRIENDS ON THIS ISSUE. IN MY OPINION, FRANKLY, MOSCOW HAS MISSED SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLAYING A STATESMANLIKE ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND BY SEEKING SHORT-TERM ADVANTAGE THEY HAVE BROUGHT INTO QUESTION THEIR OWN COMMITMENT TO THE SPIRIT OF THE OCTOBER 1 STATEMENT. IN A WORD, I DO NOT THINK THAT THEY HAVE CARRIED OUT IN A VERY EFFECTIVE WAY THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AS CO-CHAIRMAN.

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- NOW THE THIRD AREA IS THE HORN OF AFRICA. I DON'T THINK ANY RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL WOULD DENY THAT SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF THE ETHIOPIANS HAS HAD A DAMAGING AND NEGATIVE EFFECT ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. AS YOU KNOW, THE SOVIETS HAVE ABOUT 1,000 OFFICIALS IN ETHIOPIA AT THE PRESENT TIME AND THE CUBANS HAVE, ACCORDING TO BEST ESTIMATES, ABOUT 13,000 TROOPS. AND THERE'S BEEN NO CHANGE IN THIS PICTURE, SO FAR AS I'M AWARE, DESPITE THE FACT THAT AS WE ALL KNOW THE SOMALIS HAVE WITHDRAWN THEIR FORCES FROM THE OGADEN DESERT - AND IT HAD BEEN OUR HOPE THAT FOLLOWING THIS WITHDRAWAL THE SOVIETS WOULD CUT DOWN ON THEIR PRESENCE AND THE CUBANS WOULD GET OUT ALTOGETHER. NOW THE SOVIETS HAVE TOLD US THAT THEIR CONTINUED PRESENCE IS REALLY NONE OF OUR BUSINESS AND THAT IN PARTICULAR ANY QUESTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE CUBANS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE ETHIOPIANS AND THE CUBANS THEMSELVES, AND NOT TO THE SOVIETS. WELL, THIS I FEEL IS NOT A VERY HELPFUL RESPONSE BECAUSE WE ALL KNOW THAT THE SOVIETS DO HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL DEGREE OF CONTROL OVER THE LARGE-SCALE DEPLOYMENT OF CUBAN COMBAT FORCES OVERSEAS. FOR ONE THING, THEY ARE TRANSPORTED THERE ON SOVIET SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT AND WITHOUT SOVIET HELP THEY COULDN'T BE THERE AND CERTAINLY THE SOVIETS SHOULD BE PREPARED TO HELP THEM MOVE OUT, IN LOGISTIC TERMS. THERE'S NO QUESTION, IN MY VIEW, THAT THE LONGER THESE FORCES REMAIN IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE, THE LONGER THIS ISSUE WILL BE AN IRRITANT IN THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION. SO I THINK THAT'S THE THIRD AREA, PROBLEM AREA, IN WHICH WE HAVE SERIOUS DIFFERENCES AND WHICH HAVE A RATHER NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OUR RELATIONS.

Q: LOOKING AT IT BROADLY, MR. AMBASSADOR, YOU'VE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE SOVIET UNION MANY YEARS NOW. WE HEARD A LOT

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ABOUT EAST-WEST DETENTE A FEW YEARS AGO. DO YOU THINK

THIS IS STILL A LIVING POLICY? IS IT AN OPERATIVE POLICY
AT THE MOMENT?

A: YES, I THINK DETENTE IS VERY MUCH ALIVE. I THINK ONE
OF THE PROBLEMS HAS BEEN, IN MY VIEW, AN INADE-
QUATE OR EVEN INCORRECT PERCEPTION OF DETENTE ON THE PART
OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND GENERALLY THE WEST IN THE
PAST. I THINK THAT IN THE SEVENTIES THERE WAS A MISUNDER-
STANDING OF THE REAL NATURE OF DETENTE. DETENTE, I THINK
WE SHOULD ALL UNDERSTAND, DOES NOT IMPLY MUTUAL UNDER-
STANDING, OR FRIENDSHIP, OR EVEN GOOD RELATIONS. IT MEANS
PRECISELY WHAT THE WORD MEANS, BOTH IN FRENCH AND IN RUS-
SIAN: "RAZRYADKA", DETENTE. IT MEANS A RELAXATION OF
TENSIONS AND THAT'S ALL. WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THERE WILL
BE PERIODS OF GOOD AND POOR RELATIONS, EVEN WITH DETENTE,
.AND WHERE THERE ARE COMMON INTERESTS WE CAN TRY TO REACH
AGREEMENTS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. AND WE HAVE DONE SO,
IN TRADE, ARMS CONTROL, SCIENCE AND OTHER AREAS. WHERE
WE CANNOT FIND COMMON INTERESTS THERE WILL BE FRICTION AND
COMPETITION. WE HOPE THERE WILL NOT BE CONFLICT. THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE AND PEOPLE OF OTHER NATIONS, IT SEEMS TO
ME, MUST AVOID THE EXTREMES OF EUPHORIA AND FRUSTRATION
SIMPLY BECAUSE DETENTE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE AN UNBROKEN
LINE OF SUCCESSES LEADING TO GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION. DETENTE FRANKLY IS A
PATH WITH ITS UPS AND DOWNS. UNFORTUNATELY, AT THE PRESENT
TIME WE HAPPEN TO BE IN ONE OF THE DOWN PERIODS.

Q: MR. AMBASSADOR, WHAT WOULD BE THE REPERCUSSIONS, IF
ANY, IF SOVIET AUTHORITIES PUT ON TRIAL, AS THEY SAY THEY
WILL, THE YOUNG SOVIET DISSIDENT ANATOLIY SHCHARANSKIY?
WHAT HAS THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT SAID ON THIS TO THE SO-
VIET UNION?

A: I THINK ALL OF US THAT FOCUS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BE-
TWEEN MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON FEEL STRONGLY THAT A SHCHARAN-
SKIY TRIAL AND A BRUTAL MOVE AGAINST SHCHARANSKIY WILL MAKE
IT VERY DIFFICULT INDEED FOR US TO DO THE SORTS OF THINGS
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WHICH, I THINK BOTH OF US FEEL, ARE ESSENTIAL TO PEACE
AND STABILITY IN THE WORLD. NOW, WE HAVE TOLD THE SOVIETS
THIS, BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, AND WE HOPE THAT THEY
HAVE LISTENED TO US AND HAVE NOT DISMISSED OUR STATEMENTS
AS BEING, AS THEY HAVE CLAIMED PUBLICLY, DELIBERATE INTER-
FERENCE IN THEIR INTERNAL AFFAIRS. THIS IS A VERY SERIOUS
QUESTION AND I THINK THE SOVIET SIDE OUGHT TO LOOK AT IT
SERIOUSLY.

Q: WHY IS THIS CASE, MORE THAN THE OTHER DISSIDENT CASES,
OF SPECIAL INTEREST? WHY IS THIS NOT SIMPLY AN INTERNAL
AFFAIR OF THE SOVIET UNION?

A: I THINK PRIMARILY - WELL, THERE ARE TWO REASONS PER-
HAPS. ONE IS THAT THE CHARGES AGAINST SHCHARANSKIY ARE
MUCH MORE SERIOUS THAN THE CHARGES AGAINST OTHER PROMINENT

DISSIDENTS. THEY, AS YOU KNOW, INCLUDE THE CHARGE OF TREASON, A VERY SERIOUS CHARGE IN THE SOVIET UNION WHICH CARRIES A PENALTY RANGING FROM FIFTEEN YEARS TO DEATH. AND SECONDLY, I THINK THE SHCHARANSKIY CASE HAS BECOME A CAUSE CELEBRE IN THE UNITED STATES RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY AND HAS BECOME A FOCUS OF NOT ONLY PUBLIC ATTENTION BUT ABOVE ALL CONGRESSIONAL ATTENTION. I THINK IT'S FOR THESE TWO REASONS THAT THIS CASE IS SINGULAR.

Q: LET ME GO BACK TO THE SALT AGREEMENT, MR. AMBASSADOR. WHAT WOULD BE YOUR VIEWS ABOUT THE CHANCES FOR AN EARLY AGREEMENT AND THE LONG-PLANNED SUMMIT IN WASHINGTON WITH PRESIDENT BREZHNEV?

A: WELL, AS I SAID BEFORE, I THINK THE CHANCES OF OUR REACHING ANY AGREEMENT ON SALT, WHETHER AN EARLY AGREEMENT OR A LATER AGREEMENT, ARE MINIMIZED IF IN FACT BOTH SIDES DO NOT RECOGNIZE THAT WE HAVE TO MAKE MAJOR DECISIONS IN ORDER TO MOVE AHEAD. IF IN FACT THE SOVIET SIDE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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DOES NOT RECOGNIZE THAT PART OF THE FAULT FOR DELAY RESTS WITH THEM AS WELL AS WITH THE UNITED STATES - CERTAINLY WE RECOGNIZE THIS AND I AM NOT ENCOURAGED TO THINK THAT THE SOVIETS DO, ON THE BASIS OF ARTICLES WHICH HAVE APPEARED IN THE PRESS OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS - I WOULD HOPE THAT THERE WOULD BE RECOGNITION FAIRLY SOON THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE TO FACE UP TO MAJOR POLITICAL DECISIONS IF IN FACT WE'RE GOING TO MOVE AHEAD ON SALT.

Q: AND THIS IS STILL LINKED THEN TO THE SUMMIT WITH PRESIDENT BREZHNEV, FROM THE SOVIET POINT OF VIEW?

A: WELL, ON THE QUESTION OF SUMMITRY OUR POSITION IS PERFECTLY CLEAR. WE HAVE STATED IT PUBLICLY AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL AND WE HAVE CONVEYED IT PRIVATELY TO THE SOVIETS THROUGH MANY CHANNELS AND ON MANY OCCASIONS. THE PRESIDENT IS PERFECTLY WILLING TO MEET WITH MR. BREZHNEV AT ANY TIME. HE THINKS THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO SIT DOWN AND GET A MEASURE OF EACH OTHER. THE SOVIET POSITION IS A GOOD DEAL DIFFERENT FROM THIS. THE SOVIETS TRADITIONALLY HAVE FELT THAT A SUMMIT MEETING SHOULD BE THE OCCASION, IN THE PAST, FOR SIGNING IMPORTANT AGREEMENTS. MORE RECENTLY THEY HAVE SAID THAT IT MUST BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL POLITICAL MOVE FORWARD. SO THAT YOU CAN SEE THAT THE PRESCRIPTIONS FOR SUMMITRY ARE WIDELY DIFFERENT. I WOULD THINK THAT IF IN FACT BOTH SIDES DECIDE THAT MAJOR POLITICAL DECISIONS MUST BE MADE IN ORDER TO MOVE AHEAD ON SALT, THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO ARRIVE AT A STATE OF AFFAIRS WHICH WOULD PERMIT A SUMMIT MEETING TO TAKE PLACE FAIRLY SOON. BUT I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO PREDICT WHEN. I WOULD SIMPLY REITERATE MY HOPE THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO MEET THE SOVIET REQUIREMENTS

IN THE FAIRLY NEAR FUTURE.

Q: THANK YOU VERY MUCH, SIR.

A: THANK YOU.

(END TEXT)

3. FYI HOPKINS DEPARTED MOSCOW FOR MUNICH AFTERNOON OF
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MARCH 31. HE INFORMS US HE WILL MOST LIKELY PREPARE COR-
RESPONDENT REPORT UTILIZING EXTENDED EXCERPTS FORM TEXT
CONVEYED ABOVE. CORRESPONDENT REPORT WOULD BE FOR VOA
WORLD-WIDE ENGLISH SERVICE. HOPKINS ALSO PLANS TO TRANS-
MIT FULL VOICE INTERVIEW TO VOA WASHINGTON FOR SUCH USE BY
INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGE SERVICES AS MAY BE DESIRED. HOPKINS
SPECULATES THAT RUSSIAN SERVICE MAY WISH TO USE ALL OR
MOST OF INTERVIEW FOR BROADCAST TO USSR. TOON UNQUOTE
VANCE

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